

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 SP-02 INR-07 /037 W  
-----105576 081735Z /44

R 081546Z JUL 77  
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5935

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 11277

FOR VEST FROM SPIERS

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINT, PFOR, UK  
SUBJECT: BRITAIN'S TROUBLES

1. SOME OF MY COLLEAGUES HERE HAVE URGED ME TO PUT DOWN A FEW OF THE PARTING THOUGHTS I HAVE EXPRESSED ORALLY ABOUT THE STATE AND FUTURE OF BRITAIN. I HAD NO INTENTION OF DOING SO UNTIL PERSUADED THAT MY SIX AND ONE-HALF YEARS OF SERVICE HERE IN TWO SEPARATE ASSIGNMENTS, THE FACT THAT MANY OF THE PEOPLE WHO MAKE THIS COUNTRY "TICK" ARE CLOSE FRIENDS AND THAT I HAVE SERVED LONGER, IN TOTO, THAN EITHER OF MY TWO AMBASSADORS GAVE ME A PERSPECTIVE, WHICH, THOUGH PERHAPS NOT CORRECT. HAD AT LEAST SOME CLAIM TO CREDIBILITY.

2. I WILL NOT CITE STATISTICS. BRITAIN'S ESSENTIAL PROBLEMS ARE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC AND THE FACTS ABOUT UNEMPLOYMENT, INFLATION, PAYMENTS BALANCES, PRODUCTIVITY, ETC., SOMETIMES POINT IN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS AT THE SAME TIME OR THEMSELVES VARY OVER TIME. MY CONCLUSIONS ARE BASED ON POLITICAL INSTINCT, THE KIND OF "FEEL" ABOUT WHICH SECRETARY MCNAMARA USED TO BE SO SCATHING, RATHER THAN INTELLECTUAL ANALYSIS.

3. I LEAVE HERE WITH CONTINUING OPTIMISM ABOUT  
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BRITAIN'S FUTURE AND SOMEWHAT BEMUSED THAT MY FELLOW-AMERICANS SHOULD RELY ON THE PICTURE THAT COMES THROUGH THE AMERICAN MEDIA FOR ANY REAL UNDERSTANDING OF THIS COUNTRY AND WHAT IS GOING ON. I AM ALWAYS AMUSED WHEN AMERICANS ARRIVING AT HEATHROW SEEM A TOUCH SURPRISED THAT THE COUNTRY HAS NOT IN FACT SUNK BENEATH THE WAVES.

4. ESSENTIALLY BRITAIN HAS BEEN COPING WITH THE LONG SPREAD-OUT AFTERSHOCKS OF LOSS OF AN EMPIRE, WHICH GAVE IT THE POSSIBILITY OF SUSTAINING A LARGE POPULATION AT A HIGHER STANDARD OF LIVING THAN IT COULD DO AS THE SIMPLE ISLAND NATION IT HAS BECOME. THIS IN ITSELF WOULD HAVE REQUIRED AN ADJUSTMENT TO A LOWER STANDARD OF LIVING OR A CHANGE IN ATTITUDES ABOUT WHAT WAS NECESSARY TO EARN A LIVING. FOR A WHILE BRITAIN WAS ABLE ARTIFICIALLY TO PUT OFF THE MOST PAINFUL ELEMENTS OF THIS ADJUSTMENT BY BORROWING ABROAD OR REDISTRUBUTING WEALTH AT HOME. THE MAJOR INHIBITOR OF INDUSTRIAL MODERNIZATION HAS BEEN A CLASS SYSTEM WHICH IN SOME ASPECTS AMOUNTED TO A CAST SYSTEM. THIS SYSTEM, WHILE STILL A PSYCHOLOGICAL REALITY FOR MANY, IS CORRODING. I HAVE BEEN ABLE TO SEE THIS PROCESS TAKING PLACE ON ASSEMBLY LINES. IN COAL MINES. AMONG INDUSTRIAL MANAGERS AND IN BUSINESS SCHOOLS. THE OLD BOY NETWORK, CLASSICS-ORIENTED MANAGER IS DISAPPEARING AND HIS PLACE IS BEING TAKEN BY NEW TECHNOCRATS WHO DO NOT HAVE THE SAME ANTI-TECHNOLOGICAL BIAS OR PATRONIZING OUTLOOK OF THEIR PREDECESSORS. IN TIME THESE CHANGES WILL ALSO BRING CHANGES IN THE ATTITUDE OF THE UNION RANK AND FILE, WHICH IS NOW PROBABLY THE MOST CLASS CONSCIOUS ELEMENT OF BRITISH SOCIETY. ITS "GUERRILLA WARFARE"

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 SP-02 INR-07 /037 W  
-----105894 081734Z /44

R 081546Z JUL 77  
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5936

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 LONDON 11277

SOCIAL OUTLOOK IS MODERATING GRADUALLY. WHILE SOME IMPORTANT PROBLEMS WILL REMAIN I BELIEVE THAT A DECADE FROM NOW MANY OF THE POLICIES (E.G. TAXATION, NATIONALIZATION INVESTMENT, ETC.) WHICH ARE THE DESPAIR OF SO MANY OBSERVERS WILL HAVE FUNDAMENTALLY CHANGED.

5. BRITAIN WILL NEVER AGAIN BE A MAJOR POWER AND ITS EMERGENCE FROM ITS PRESENT TIME OF TROUBLES WILL BE SLOW BUT, I BELIEVE, INEXORABLE. TEN YEARS FROM NOW MANY COUNTRIES OF THE ADVANCED INDUSTRIAL WORLD--QUITE POSSIBLY INCLUDING OUR OWN--MAY WELL BE COMING HERE FOR LESSONS ON HOW BRITAIN HAS SUCCEEDED IN MAINTAINING ITS QUALITY OF LIFE, ACHIEVING A REMARKABLE LEVEL OF SOCIAL JUSTICE, A RESPECTABLE STANDARD OF LIVING FOR ITS POPULATION, AND A STRENGTHENING OF ITS STABLE PRAGMATIC, NON-IDEOLOGICAL, "TRIAL AND ERROR" BRAND OF SELF-GOVERNMENT. BRITAIN IS AT THE CUTTING EDGE IN DEALING WITH MANY OF THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC PROBLEMS WHICH NATIONS LIKE OUR OWN WILL INCREASINGLY HAVE TO COPE WITH. THE GENTLENESS, CIVILITY, THE RELATIVE ABSENCE OF STRIDENCY AND VIOLENCE IN ITS SOCIETY GIVE IT UNIQUE RESERVES OF SPIRIT AS A PATHFINDER IN MOVING FROM ONE SOCIAL EQUILIBRIUM TO ANOTHER.

6. THIS IS IMPRESSIONISTIC AND NON-ANALYTICAL AND  
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THEREFORE PROBABLY IN THE WORST TRADITION OF FOREIGN SERVICE COMMENTARIES. NEVERTHELESS EVERY TIME I HAVE IGNORED MY INSTINCTS ABOUT A PROBLEM IN THE PAST 25 YEARS I HAVE LATER BEEN SORRY. TO PARAPHRASE WILLIAM FAULKNER'S NOBEL PRIZE SPEECH, MY CONVICTION IS THAT BRITAIN "WILL NOT ONLY SURVIVE, IT WILL PREVAIL."

BREWSTER

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## Message Attributes

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